

Message Text

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ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 EUR-12 ISO-00 AF-06 EA-06 NEA-09 RSC-01

SP-02 AID-05 NSC-05 CIEP-01 TRSE-00 SS-15 STR-01

OMB-01 CEA-01 L-02 H-01 PA-01 PRS-01 USIE-00 IO-10

AGR-05 INRE-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 FRB-01 INR-07 NSAE-00

XMB-02 OPIC-03 LAB-04 SIL-01 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /117 W

----- 092952

O R 081335Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6437

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L BOGOTA 0149

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ETRD, EAGR, CO

SUBJECT: COLOMBIAN VIEWS ON COFFEE AGREEMENT

1. SUMMARY: COLOMBIAN COFFEE FEDERATION MANAGER ARTURO GOMEZ JARAMILLO IN JAN 7 MEETING WITH ECONOMIC COUNSELOR OUTLINED HIS THINKING ON NEGOTATION OF NEW INTERNATIONAL COFFEE AGREEMENT. DURING CONVERSATION, WHICH ARRANGED AT GOMEZ INITIATIVE, HE EMPHASIZED THAT IF NEGOTIATIONS WERE TO SUCCEED IT WAS ESSENTIAL TO HAVE PRIOR CONSULTATION AND UNDERSTANDING AT LEAST ON BASIC PRINCIPLES AMONG US COLOMBIA AND BRAZIL AND THAT THIS IN TURN WOULD REQUIRE US TO ABAONDON ITS CURRENT PASSIVE ATTITUDE. END SUMMARY.

2. DURING CONVERSATION IN HIS OFFICE JAN 7, COFFEE FEDERATION MANAGER ARTURO GOMEZ JARAMILLO WAS HIGHLY SKEPTICAL THAT CURRENTLY SCHEDULED SERIES OF MEETINGS IN LONDON WOULD PRODUCE ANY REAL PROGRESS IN NEGOTIATING NEW INTERNATIONAL COFFEE AGREEMENT. WITH
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SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO WORKING GROUP MEETINGS EXPECTED TO

BEGIN ON JAN 20 HE SAID THAT IN HIS VIEW LITTLE MORE
COULD BE EXPECTED THAN AN AGREEMENT TO MEET AGAIN AT LATER
DATE. GOMEZ SAID THAT COLOMBIA HAD MADE EFFORTS IN
LONDON TO POSTPONE MEETINGS UNTIL PROSPECTS FOR REAL
ACHIEVEMENT HAD IMPROVED BUT THAT AFRICAN COUNTRIES HAD
INSISTED ON MOVING AHEAD. HE WAS CONVINCED THAT ONLY
OUTCOME WOULD BE SERIES OF TIME-WASTING SPEECHES. MUCH
MORE PREPARATORY WORK WAS NEEDED AND SPECIFICALLY HE
THOUGHT IT WOULD BE FUTILE TO ATTEMPT TO NEGOTIATE IN
LONDON FORUM UNLESS THERE WAS PRIOR UNDERSTANDING AMONG
UNITED STATES AS MAJOR CONSUMER AND COLOMBIA AND BRAZIL
AS MAJOR PRODUCERS ON AT LEAST BASIC PRINCIPLES OF NEW
AGREEMENT. (IN PASSING GOMEZ EXPRESSED CONCERN AS TO
WHETHER EXCLUSION IN TITLE VI OF NEW TRADE ACT WOULD APPLY
TO COUNTRIES PARTICIPATING IN PRODUCER COFFEE AGREEMENTS
SUCH AS CAFE MUNDIAL. HE SAID THIS WOULD CERTAINLY BE
ONE OF QUESTIONS ADDRESSED TO US REPRESENTATIVES AT
LONDON MEETINGS.)

3. GOMEZ ARGUED STRONGLY THAT GIVEN PRESENT COFFEE
PRICE STRUCTURE AND TRENDS IN INTERNATIONAL MARKET IT
SHOULD BE EASIER TO WORK OUT NEW AGREEMENT THAN IN RECENT
PAST WHEN VERY STRONG PRICES MADE ANY COMPROMISE BETWEEN
PRODUCER AND CONSUMER EXCEPTIONALLY DIFFICULT. THE
EXISTING PRODUCER ACCORDS HE SAID WOULD PRESENT NO
OBSTACLE SINCE THEY WERE SUBJECT TO NEGOTIATION ALONG WITH
ALL OTHER ELEMENTS OF A NEW AGREEMENT. REPEATING ARGUMENTS
THAT HE HAS MADE IN PAST, GOMEZ SAID PRODUCER AGREEMENTS
EXISTED ONLY BECAUSE OF RELUCTANCE OF CONSUMER COUNTRIES
AND ESPECIALLY THE US TO ACCEPT AN ACTIVE ROLE IN
NEGOTIATING A NEW INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENT.

4. FINALLY, GOMEZ SUGGESTED THAT IF AS HE ANTICIPATED
THE JAN 20 MEETINGS RESULTED ONLY IN AN AGREEMENT TO
MEET AGAIN AT LATER DATE THE US COLOMBIA AND BRAZIL
SHOULD ATTEMPT TO WORK OUT UNDERSTANDING ON THE BASIC
PRINCIPLES OF AN AGREEMENT PRIOR TO RESUMING BROADER
MULTILATERAL DISCUSSION IN LONDON, THIS IN TURN HE
SAID WOULD REQUIRE THE US TO ABANDON PASSIVE ROLE THAT
IT HAS ADOPTED IN THE PAST, TO TAKE INITIATIVES, AND TO
PARTICIPATE ACTIVELY IN SEARCH FOR SOLUTIONS TO MANY
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PROBLEMS INVOLVED. GOMEZ SAID HE FULLY REALIZED DOMESTIC
POLITICAL DIFFICULTIES US WOULD FACE IN PURSUING THIS
APPROACH BUT THAT INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL BENEFITS TO THE
US WOULD BE SUBSTANTIAL. GIVEN ENORMOUS IMPORTANCE
OF COFFEE IN LATIN AMERICAN ECONOMY NO SINGLE ACT
WOULD INJECT MORE REAL SUBSTANCE INTO NEW DIALOG THEN
ACTIVE US PARTICIPATION IN EFFORT TO WORK OUT NEW
INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENT.

5. GOMEZ TOOK INITIATIVE IN ARRANGING MEETING
AND CLEARLY WANTED HIS VIEWS PASSED TO WASHINGTON.
ALTHOUGH ON VARIOUS OCCASIONS IN PAST HE HAS EXPRESSED
SIMILAR VIEWS IN CONVERSATIONS WITH EMBASSY OFFICERS WE
THINK IT IS A MEASURE OF GOMEZ CONCERN OVER THE FUTURE
OF THE INTERNATIONAL COFFEE MARKET THAT HE TOOK THE
INITIATIVE ON THIS OCCASION TO SEEK US OUT. THE
CONVESATION ALSO REFLECTS ONCE AGAIN COLOMBIA'S
PREFERENCE TO SEEK COOPERATIVE SOLUTIONS RATHER THAN
CONFRONTATIONS.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: COFFEE, AGREEMENTS, NEGOTIATIONS, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 08 JAN 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: johnsorg
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975BOGOTA00149
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750007-0669
From: BOGOTA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750171/aaaacjva.tel
Line Count: 127
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EB
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: johnsorg
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 19 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <19 JUN 2003 by WorrelSW>; APPROVED <04 NOV 2003 by johnsorg>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: COLOMBIAN VIEWS ON COFFEE AGREEMENT
TAGS: ETRD, EAGR, CO, (JARAMILLO, ARTURO GOMEZ)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006